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Subject: Possible need for follow-up: Call from Skagit County

Peter and Lucy,

I am wondering if either of you, or perhaps Dan, might give Dan Berentson from Skagit County Public Works a call to shore up relations with him. Dan is involved in the Clean Samish Initiative.

Dan called me yesterday late afternoon - he had called Bill Zachmann earlier as well, and Bill kindly put him through to me.

As Bill had reported earlier, Dan said that the "Whatsupstream.com" website raised concerns with him and people he works/interacts with for several reasons:

- 1) It seemed to be a lobbying effort supported by our funding
- 2) EPA seemed to be sending a mixed message - the website says voluntary approaches are insufficient, yet EPA is funding the Clean Samish Initiative which, in conjunction with Results WA and the Governor's office, is pursuing collaborative, voluntary efforts
- 3) Some of the "partners" listed on the "Whatsupstream.com" website are litigious and raises concerns and alarms in Dan's circles

Dan noted that it was Bill Dewey from Taylor Shellfish who forwarded him the "Whatsupstream.com" link.

Dan was interested in knowing more about the Tribal LO program under which the website was funded, and I will point him to our website (<http://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/current-work-funded-epa#tribal>) for information on the Tribal LO. I also tried to convey the following information over the phone:

- 1) The Tribal LO was one of seven LOs we funded beginning in 2010. NWIFC administers the Tribal LO program.
- 2) Each LO makes subawards under their program. For the Tribal LO, NWIFC makes subawards to tribes to implement activities in or consistent with the Action Agenda that are of high tribal priority.
- 3) The Swinomish tribe, in pursuing this project, cited the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan, which is part of the Action Agenda, specifically noting that the SCRP calls for a vigorous public outreach campaign for the need to protect water quality and salmon habitat.
- 4) While NWIFC, as the LO, has primary responsibility for reviewing and approving subaward projects, EPA reviewed this project. With regard to lobbying, as the website targeted its messages at the state level, and since no specific piece of legislation, initiative, ballot measure, etc. is at issue, the website does not overstep grant lobbying restrictions.
- 5) As the disclaimer on the website indicates, the website doesn't necessarily reflect EPA's views or positions.

In Dan's view, the website may further erode the tenuous trust among entities in the Skagit Basin. He commented that he had just gotten off the phone with Jim Weber from NWIFC, who had been asking for data I believe on the Clean Samish Initiative, and Dan wondered why the Commission was looking for this data, and how it would be used.

Lisa